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SUBJECT: PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT LOOKS FOR MEANS TO EXPAND  
ZIMBABWE OBSERVATION TEAM

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) PolOff met with Murumba Werunga, Secretary General of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), on 29 May to discuss their plans to send an expanded election observation team back to Zimbabwe to monitor the 27 June run-off election. Werunga said that an advance team will go out 05 June to work on logistics, and that official observers will arrive 14 June. During the 29 March election, PAP sent 19 observers. This time, they have 30 MPs confirmed to go. Observers will receive training during the first four days in country, and then will be dispatched throughout the country in teams of two, ideally pairing each new observer with one who monitored the previous election in March. They will stay in Zimbabwe until 05 July at the latest, unless results are announced before then.

¶2. (C) Werunga added that the response from PAP members to monitor the Zimbabwean election has been overwhelming and that they had more volunteers than they could accommodate. He was confident he could easily add another ten MPs if he had more funding. Currently, the PAP has \$US250,000 for the mission, but would need an additional \$US50,000 to fund the extra members. When asked if funding was the only obstacle to increasing the mission, he replied candidly that money was not the only issue. "Our members aren't professional election observers," he said. He also said later on in the conversation that he knows Mugabe was happy with their final report on the 29 March election, and that he would like to maintain a positive relationship with everyone, intimating that they may lose neutrality if they were to return with too many observers. In this same vein, he also said that if the USG were to support an increased observation team, he would appreciate the USG discretion in not advertising the fact to allow PAP to maintain this neutral position. (COMMENT: PAP's final report of its election observation mission -- in stark contrast to SADC's final report -- was critical of the government's involvement in election irregularities. PAP expressed concerns about the printing of excess ballot papers, the timing of state-sponsored "donations" immediately before the election, irregularities in voter registration, disproportionate media access, and the fact that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission lost control of the election process and that its constitutional obligations were gravely compromised, among numerous other concerns. END COMMENT)

¶3. (C) As for expected results, Werunga said he is optimistic that the election will be a success, despite the ongoing violence. He said that Zimbabweans are "showing resilience." Another woman in the room (who was not introduced) added

that by going out two weeks before the election, PAP monitors will be able to identify any intimidation or manipulation in advance. She also added that as long as the ballot remains secret, she believes people will come out to vote. (COMMENT: Reading between the lines, both Werunga and his colleague implied they expect an MDC victory. END COMMENT)

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Given the ongoing violence in Zimbabwe (septel), there is obviously an urgent need to increase observers for the run-off scheduled for 27 June, especially observer missions like the PAP, which was willing to speak out about election irregularities. Their willingness and courage should be supported, especially since PAP's criticisms are more palatable to some African countries than those coming from the West. The Department may wish to consider funding the training of MPs to monitor elections, which could have long-lasting benefits both for trained MPs home countries and for future observation missions. Werunga said the PAP is scheduled to monitor seven elections on the continent next year. He could not remember all seven countries, but mentioned Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Rwanda, and Swaziland, all of which have the potential to be contentious. BOST